CLAIMS

We claim:

1.   A method for scheduling a plurality of meetings with a plurality of invitee users on a calendar of a primary user, comprising the steps of:

    said primary user creating a primary appointment template identifying available meeting times;

    sending said primary appointment template to said plurality of invitee users; and

    each said invitee user selecting an available time from said primary appointment template to schedule a meeting with said primary user.

2.   The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of identifying available meeting times on said primary appointment template by specifying days worked, workday start and ending times, and by blocking out previously

5   scheduled appointments and break times on said calendar of

6   said primary user.

1   3.   The method of claim 2, further comprising the step of

2   creating said primary appointment template by merging a

3   default template and said calendar with primary user

4   selected meeting length, time frame and time restriction

5   objects, said default template defining said days worked,

6   said workday start and ending times, and said break times,

7   and said calendar defining said previously scheduled

8   appointments.

1   4.   The method of claim 2, further comprising the steps

2   responsive to a first invitee user selecting a first

3   available time of dynamically scheduling a first meeting at

4   said first available time, entering said first meeting into

5   said primary appointment template, notifying said primary

6   user and said first invitee user of said first meeting, and

7   blocking further invitee users from scheduling a second

8   meeting conflicting with said first available time.

1   5.   The method of claim 2, further comprising the steps of

2   said plurality of invitee users iteratively selecting

3   multiple meeting times from said primary appointment

4   template until there is one time selected by each said

5 invitee user, and notifying said primary user and said

6 plurality of invitee users of said one time.

1 6. The method of claim 4, further comprising the steps of

2 creating said primary appointment template as a two

3 dimensional array of objects, each said object representing

4 a block of time and an attribute.

1 7. The method of claim 6, said attribute being selected

2 from the group of attributes including current scheduled

3 meeting, free time, start time, end time, and break time.

1 8. The method of claim 7, further comprising the step of

2 presenting to said primary user a menu entry and associated

3 pop-up windows for creating said primary appointment

4 template.

1 9. The method of claim 8, further comprising the step of

2 distributing said primary appointment template as a graphic

3 object including time slots available for selection by

4 prospective meeting attendees.

1 10. The method of claim 2, further comprising the step of:

2 responsive to said first invitee user receiving a note

3   with a meeting request from said primary user, said

4   first invitee user opening said note and displaying

5   said primary appointment template in graphical format,

6   said primary appointment template being retrieved from

7   a primary server upon said note being opened.

1   11.   The method of claim 10, further comprising the step of:

2   upon said first invitee user selecting an available

3   meeting time, updating said primary appointment

4   template to block further invitee users from selecting

5   said meeting time selected by said first invitee user.

1   12.   The method of claim 11, further comprising the step of:

2   responsive to said first invitee user opening said note

3   containing said primary appointment template, creating

4   from said primary appointment template and a calendar

5   object for said first invitee user a first merged

6   appointment template object from which said first

7   invitee user may select said available meeting time.

1   13.   The method of claim 12, further comprising the step of

2   configuring time blocks of available meeting times in

3   said first merged appointment template object as

4   buttons, selection of a button resulting in the step of

5   sending an accept meeting request message to said

6   primary server.

1   14.   The method of claim 13, each said time block being a

2   hyperlink linking said first invitee user to a web page

3   on said primary server for disabling said time block

4   from further selection in said primary appointment

5   template and updating a calendar object for said

6   primary user at said primary server.

1   15.   The method of claim 4, further comprising the step of

2   distributing an updated primary appointment template

3   to said further invitee users responsive to said first

4   invitee user selecting said first available time.

1   16.   The method of claim 4, further comprising the step of

2   distributing an updated primary appointment template to

3   a second invitee user responsive to said second invitee

4   user opening a copy of said note containing said

5   primary meeting template.

1   17.   System for scheduling a plurality of meetings with a

2   plurality of individuals on a calendar of a primary user,

3   comprising:

4   a primary appointment template object for storing a

5   plurality of available time slots in said calendar of

6   said primary user;

7   a primary server for storing said first appointment

8   template object;

9   a plurality of calendar template objects, a said

10   calendar template object for each of a plurality of

11   invitee users;

12   a calendar tool for distributing said first appointment

13   template object to a plurality of said invitee users;

14   each said plurality of said invitee users having a

15   selector for selecting an available time slot from said

16   first appointment template object at said primary

17   server.

1   18.   The system of claim 17, said primary appointment

2   template object comprising a default template and

3   appointment calendar merged with primary user selected

4   meeting length, time frame and time restrictions objects.

1   19.   The system of claim 18, said default template

2   specifying work days, start, end and break times and said

3   appointment calendar specifying periodic and other

4   appointments on the appointment calendar of said primary

5   user.

1   20.   A program storage device readable by a machine,

2   tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by a

3   machine to perform method steps for scheduling a plurality

4   of meetings with a plurality of invitee users on a calendar

5   of a primary user, said method steps comprising:

6   said primary user creating a primary appointment

7   template identifying available meeting times;

8   sending said primary appointment template to said

9   plurality of invitee users; and

10   each said invitee user selecting an available time from

11   said primary appointment template to schedule a meeting

12   with said primary user.

1   21. The program storage device of claim 20, said method

2   steps further comprising the steps of identifying available

3   meeting times on said primary appointment template by

4   specifying days worked, workday start and ending times, and

5   by blocking out previously scheduled appointments and break

6   times on said calendar of said primary user.

1   22. The program storage device of claim 21, said method

2   steps further comprising the step of creating said primary

3   appointment template by merging a default template and said

4   calendar with primary user selected meeting length, time

5   frame and time restriction objects, said default template

6   defining said days worked, said workday start and ending

7   times, and said break times, and said calendar defining said

8   previously scheduled appointments.

1   23. The program storage device of claim 21, said method

2   steps further comprising the steps responsive to a first

3   invitee user selecting a first available time of dynamically

4   scheduling a first meeting at said first available time,

5   entering said first meeting into said primary appointment

6   template, notifying said primary user and said first invitee

7   user of said first meeting, and blocking further invitee

8   users from scheduling a second meeting conflicting with said

9   first available time.

1   24. The program storage device of claim 21, said method

2   steps further comprising the steps of said plurality of

3 invitee users iteratively selecting multiple meeting times

4 from said primary appointment template until there is one

5 time selected by each said invitee user, and notifying said

6 primary user and said plurality of invitee users of said one

7 time.

1 25.   The program storage device of claim 23, said method

2 steps further comprising the steps of creating said primary

3 appointment template as a two dimensional array of objects,

4 each said object representing a block of time and an

5 attribute.

1 26.   The program storage device of claim 25, said method

2 steps said attribute being selected from the group of

3 attributes including current scheduled meeting, free time,

4 start time, end time, and break time.

1 27.   The program storage device of claim 26, said method

2 steps further comprising the step of presenting to said

3 primary user a menu entry and associated pop-up windows for

4 creating said primary appointment template.

1 28.   The program storage device of claim 27, said method

2 steps further comprising the step of distributing said

3 primary appointment template as a graphic object including

4   time slots available for selection by prospective meeting

5   attendees.

1   29.   The program storage device of claim 21, said method

2   steps further comprising the step of:

3   responsive to said first invitee user receiving a note

4   with a meeting request from said primary user, said

5   first invitee user opening said note and displaying

6   said primary appointment template in graphical format,

7   said primary appointment template being retrieved from

8   a primary server upon said note being opened.

1   30.   The program storage device of claim 29, said method

2   steps further comprising the step of:

3   upon said first invitee user selecting an available

4   meeting time, updating said primary appointment

5   template to block further invitee users from selecting

6   said meeting time selected by said first invitee user.

1   31.   The program storage device of claim 30, said method

2   steps further comprising the step of:

3   responsive to said first invitee user opening said note

4   containing said primary appointment template, creating

5   from said primary appointment template and a calendar

6   object for said first invitee user a first merged

7   appointment template object from which said first

8   invitee user may select said available meeting time.

1   32. The program storage device of claim 31, said method

2   steps further comprising the step of configuring time

3   blocks of available meeting times in said first merged

4   appointment template object as buttons, selection of a

5   button resulting in the step of sending an accept

6   meeting request message to said primary server.

1   33. The program storage device of claim 32, each said time

2   block being a hyperlink linking said first invitee user

3   to a web page on said primary server for disabling said

4   time block from further selection in said primary

5   appointment template and updating a calendar object for

6   said primary user at said primary server.

1   34. The program storage device of claim 23, said method

2   steps further comprising the step of distributing an

3   updated primary appointment template to said further

4   invitee users responsive to said first invitee user

5   selecting said first available time.

1   35. The program storage device of claim 23, said method

2   steps further comprising the step of distributing an

3   updated primary appointment template to a second

4   invitee user responsive to said second invitee user

5   opening a copy of said note containing said primary

6   meeting template.

1   36. A computer program product or computer program element

2   for scheduling a plurality of meetings with a plurality of

3   invitee users on a calendar of a primary user according to

4   method steps comprising:

5   creating a primary appointment template identifying

6   available meeting times on the calendar of said primary

7   user;

8   sending said primary appointment template to said

9   plurality of invitee users; and

10   each said invitee user selecting an available time from

11   said primary appointment template to schedule a meeting

12   with said primary user.